

Memorandum

8/10/05

To: Our Colleagues in Substance Abuse

From: Sinikka Santala
Administrator
Division of Disability and Elder Services
Department of Health and Family Services

Sandy Rowe
Deputy Secretary
Department of Regulation and Licensing

Re: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY SERVICES &
DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION AND LICENSING JOINT
STATEMENT TO THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE FIELD

The recently passed Wisconsin State Budget for 2005-2007, Wisconsin Act 25, requires that the responsibility for the certification of substance abuse professionals be transferred from the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) to the Department of Regulation and Licensing (DRL).

The budget bill as passed by the legislature had indicated January 1, 2006 as the date DHFS would transfer the responsibility to certify substance abuse professionals to DRL. The Governor vetoed the start date of January 1st. **This means that the transfer must take place sometime in 2006.** The last date that it can occur would be December 31, 2006.

Both the Department of Health and Family Services and the Department of Regulation and Licensing are committed to retaining a professional and competent Substance Abuse workforce in Wisconsin and fostering cultural diversity. Both departments are working together to implement the provisions of the recently passed and signed budget to ensure a smooth transition. We are also committed to providing the Substance Abuse field correct and prompt information about decisions that have been made.

The Governor, through his veto, also clarified that the Secretary of the Department of Regulation and Licensing has the final appointment authority to a new Certification Rule Committee that will advise the DRL on the new rules, rather than the original budget bill's language that Wisconsin Association on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (WAAODA) would appoint people to the committee. He clarified that WAAODA should have opportunities to provide input into the development of this Committee.

Many questions have been raised by AODA counselors and others about the implications. We will provide information and answers as we develop them. Below are two immediate responses to questions that have been raised.

What process should counselors and supervisors follow for the rest of 2005? At this time, the current process to certify substance abuse counselors and supervisors remains in place with the Wisconsin Certification Board (WCB). The DHFS and WCB are negotiating to extend their contract with DHFS through December 31, 2005. DHFS will work with the WCB to ensure that the certification process is seamless as possible for certified and entry level professionals in this transition period.

DHFS and DRL, will work together with WCB, certified counselors and advocacy groups to help create a transition process for the current certified workforce and for those beginning their careers that will minimize disruption as much as possible.

Who should we contact if we have questions about this change? We welcome opportunities to receive questions and suggestions from the profession. We will address questions based on the information available to us.

- Questions and suggestions regarding ***current status and process*** to complete counselor and clinical supervisor certification prior to the transfer to DRL can be directed to the DHFS BMHSAS contact, Susan Endres, 608-266-2476, Endresl@dhfs.state.wi.us.
- Questions and suggestions regarding the ***process for developing the new rules*** for counselor and clinical supervisor certification can be directed to the DRL contact Steve Gloe at web@drl.state.wi.us.

Where can I get more information? We will provide updates to this announcement as we have more detailed information available. This information will also be posted on the DHFS, DRL, and WCB websites. We also refer you to the following website for the actual language of Wisconsin Act 25, 2005 Assembly Bill 100 on this issue: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2005/data/acts/05Act25.pdf> , pages 328, 329, 331-332, 366-371, and 392.